

Hello, fellow teacher!

Below is your reading passage; I hope it serves you well. Print it out and it's ready to use. Or, if you want to differentiate for struggling students, use the highlight feature on the PDF to annotate what you want the kiddos to focus on.

I named my website and Teachers Pay Teachers store "Teach 'n Thrive" because I truly want to help teachers enjoy their jobs and still have time, energy and brain bandwidth for the other things in life. Hope this helps. Don't forget to check back to the site regularly and see what has been added!

Warmest Wishes,
Joan

If you're interested in an entire done-for-you lesson check out my 3 Day Unit for the American Revolution [here](#)

The American Revolution In 3 Days



Modified Reading Passages
& Activities

If you are looking for some teaching ideas to use with this reading passage watch my video [here](#).

The 13 Colonies

The very first British colony in America was Jamestown, Virginia back in 1607. After a tumultuous beginning many settlers became wealthy tobacco farmers. As time went on more and more immigrants came to the New World for the possibilities it offered. The political and social system in Britain made it difficult for someone born poor to work their way up or to buy land.

Many poor British citizens could not afford to pay their passage across the Atlantic to come to America. A wealthy American who needed labor would sometimes pay for the voyage in exchange for service, usually 7 years. The worker became an indentured servant. Oftentimes the employer would exploit his indentured servant. He would charge the worker for rent and food. As a result, when the 7 years of servitude were over, he would be forced to work longer because he owed more money.

By 1733 there were 13 colonies in North America. A colony is a place whose government and commerce is controlled by another country. It is a form of imperialism. The British made laws and controlled the commerce of the 13 colonies. She was called the "mother country" because the colonies were like her children. Just as a mother makes rules for her offspring, so too did Britain make rules for the colonies. This would eventually lead to a revolution. However, in the beginning most colonists thought of themselves as British, they were just living across the ocean.

WHY DID THE COLONISTS COME TO AMERICA?

Reasons for Settlement	Examples
<p>Political</p> 	<p>The Virginia House of Burgesses was the first democratically elected lawmaking body in North America. The members, called burgesses, were elected from each county in Virginia. From 1619 until 1776 elections were held and each county elected 2 burgesses. These ideas would later cause the American Revolution.</p> <p>Plymouth established a self-government through the Mayflower Compact. The male passengers on the ship, the Mayflower, created a set of rules establishing a self-governed colony whereby decisions would be made through voting.</p>
<p>Economic</p> 	<p>Mercantilism was the economic system in the colonies. The British controlled trade in the colonies. The British would access raw materials from the new world, manufacture products and sell them back to the colonies. Colonists were forced to purchase goods only from Britain and limited trade with other nations. This would cause resentment and later be a cause of the American Revolution. The southern colonies created large plantations (farms). This led to the importation of slaves from Africa.</p>
<p>Social</p> 	<p>Colonists came to America for freedom of religion, freedom of speech and freedom to assemble. These rights were denied in Britain.</p> <p>Voting rights. White male property-owners could vote. Even though women and minorities were excluded, this was still a much larger number of people than back in England.</p> <p>Freedom of the Press – John Zenger Trial Zenger was a journalist and newspaper publisher who defended his right to publish articles criticizing the governor. He was arrested and sent to prison. The court found him not guilty. His trial helped to establish freedom of the press in the colonies.</p>



The Thirteen colonies were divided into three geographic regions: the New England Colonies, the Middle Colonies, and the Southern Colonies. Each had its own economy and culture based on the geographic features of the area.

There were four **New England Colonies**: Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New Hampshire. Many of the colonists that moved to the New England colonies were Puritans or Pilgrims. These colonists migrated to America because they wanted to practice their religion freely. The Puritans created small towns surrounded by small farms. They also lived in towns along the Atlantic coast and made their living by fishing and trading with Europe. They believed that they should make decisions together, so they held town meetings at which decisions would be made. They also held education in high esteem was very important, so they created many schools and colleges. The first university in America was Harvard back in 1636.

The Middle Colonies

The Middle Colonies were New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. They were called the Middle Colonies because they were between the New England Colonies to the north and the Southern Colonies to the south.

People in the Middle Colonies were more diverse than the other two. There were many different religious groups in the Middle Colonies. These groups got along well because there was more tolerance for different beliefs.

The biggest cities in the Middle Colonies were New York and Philadelphia. The farms in the Middle Colonies were also bigger than the New England farms. A lot of wheat and other food crops were grown in the Middle Colonies, and much of what was produced went to feed the other colonies. This area was therefore known as the economic "breadbasket" of the colonies.

The Southern Colonies

The Southern Colonies were Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. Many colonists in the Southern Colonies created plantations. These farms were large due to the geography of the region. The south has a balmy climate and fertile land.

On the plantations, the Southern colonists grew cash crops such as cotton and tobacco. They needed a lot of cheap labor to plant and harvest the crops in order to make a profit. This was the beginning of the practice of bringing in slave labor from Africa. There were some slaves in the New England and Middle Colonies, but most of the slaves were in the Southern Colonies.